

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPTION - ORIGINAL FOLLOWS

Dear Mr. Bennett:

This is in response to your very thoughtful letter to the Secretary concerning [words excised] one suggested that he might be sent to Pakistan to work with certain Afghan refugees there who wish to see an independent Afghanistan friendly to the United States and to the ideals in which our country believes.

While I understand and sympathize with his aspirations, I do not see any way the U.S. Government can help [words excised].

As you know, there is as yet no real unity among the various Afghan groups fighting the Soviet invaders and their Kabul puppets although there are some signs of increasing cooperation among them. In one sense this is a strength, since the Soviets find it particularly difficult to deal with a guerrilla force made up of many groups with many heads. At the same time, this diversity does give concern to those who might wish to see a consensus of Afghan nationalist opinion.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

EX-100-1203

FAIR

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Mr. Bennett

This is in response to your letter of the 10th of September, 1966, regarding the situation in Afghanistan. The Department of State is aware of the situation and is in contact with the various Afghan groups fighting the Soviet occupation army. The Department of State is also aware of the fact that the Soviet Union is not an independent state and is not a member of the United States and to the United States.

While I understand and sympathize with the aspirations of the Afghan people, I am not sure that the U.S. Government can help.

As you know, there is no real unity among the various Afghan groups fighting the Soviet occupation army and their mutual purposes although there are some signs of increasing cooperation among them. In any event, this is a situation, since the Soviets find it particularly difficult to deal with a guerrilla force made up of many groups with many heads. At the same time, this diversity does give concern to those who might wish to see a consensus of Afghan nationalist opinion.

The freedom fighters and various political groups are united, however, not only in their effort to rid the country of the Soviet occupation army, but in their desire to choose for themselves their own form of government and their own leaders. This political process is one which rightly belongs solely to the Afghan people. Both this Administration and the previous administration have agreed on the necessity of the United States remaining scrupulously aloof from this Afghan political process. While we sympathize with the Afghan freedom fighters and wish them well, we cannot sponsor or give encouragement to one group, leader or organization over another.

If [redacted] were to come to Washington, the Afghan Country Officer, Ernestine Heck, would be happy to meet with him. Or he could telephone her on (202) 632-9552. I am sure you understand, however, that we cannot offer transportation from Florida to Washington since that would give the appearance of USG

The Honorable  
Charles L. Bennett,  
House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR  
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 3/19/86  
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN. DATE  
CLASS: [redacted] REASON(S)  
EXT: [redacted] MARK: NUS L  
DEC: [redacted] PART B6  
EXT: [redacted] EXTENSIONS

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TRANSCRIPTION - ORIGINAL FOLLOWS

support for him to the possible exclusion of the many others who might wish to meet with government officials but must pay their own way to come to Washington.

As to the question of American aid the Afghan refugees, the many separate groups and lack of unity among them would make effective direct aid to Afghan groups almost impossible even if it were allowed by the host government, Pakistan. Almost all US aid is routed through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who is mandated to handle such international efforts.

I note that the [excised] family are refugees in the United States. Their sponsoring organization, according to the information you have provided, is the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), which is one of several voluntary agencies helping Afghan refugees, and which receives U.S. Government grants for this purpose. It is the responsibility of the sponsor to help the refugee settle in this country. [Excised] should be encouraged to turn to the nearest USCC office for help with any questions or concerns he has.

As you point out, [excised] does have the right to work in the United States. The stamp on the back of his I-94 form is his permission to seek employment. The USCC as sponsoring agency should be able to help him, although jobs are not automatically provided for refugees. [Excised] thus may have to approach this problem on his own, just as anyone else living in the United States must.

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others who might be  
in need of such aid.  
I am sure that you  
will be able to help  
him in this regard.  
I am sure that you  
will be able to help  
him in this regard.  
I am sure that you  
will be able to help  
him in this regard.

I hope that the  
the United States. Many of the  
to the Institute. You have  
Catholic Center. (WCCO).  
agencies helping Afghan refugees, the  
Government grants for this purpose. It  
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To begin a new life as a refugee in a new country is  
difficult. I appreciate the concern you show for him,  
and I hope that you will encourage the person  
as he faces the challenges of adjusting to a new life in  
the United States.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Banks  
Assistant Secretary  
for Congressional Relations

Drafted by: NEA/PAB/ESHeck:cm  
9/29/81:ext. 29552

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